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Leadership programs boost 4-H experience

The purpose of the Wisconsin State 4-H Youth Leader Council, or YLC, is to strengthen 4-H Youth Development programs by addressing youth issues, promoting leadership at the Wisconsin 4-H and Youth Conference and communicating needs between local and state levels.

In the fall of 2010, I applied for and was elected to YLC. Being part of YLC has been the highlight of my 4-H career. YLC gives youths a chance to use and improve leadership skills, gain public speaking skills, work in youth-adult partnerships, and become more active in both their com-



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munity and state.

YLC elections are held each year at Fall Forum in October. Youths are elected to

represent districts around the state. Due to the widespread nature of the council, several of the yearly meetings are held via teleconference rather than in person.

One of the challenges given to YLC members is to try to volunteer 100 community service hours each year. Some of the ways I've volunteered have been at 4-H after-school clubs and

4-H events. Community service is also promoted at the annual Wisconsin 4-H and Youth Conference in Madison. Delegates are required to participate in a community service seminar. Past years' seminars have included working in community gardens, writing letters for Operation Military Kids, and making tie blankets for donation.

The Wisconsin 4-H and Youth Conference is the

highlight of the YLC year. The conference spans four days in June and is held on the UW Madison campus. Some of the responsibilities held by YLC include emceeing the daily assembly, organizing delegates to go to seminars, and coordinating free-time activities. In addition to YLC, Wisconsin 4-H has several other state teams: Drama Company, Showcase Singers, Photo Team and Art Team. These

teams allow youths with interests in the arts to bring their skills to the state level.

YLC members also assist at the annual Governor's Sweepstakes Meat Products Auction at the Wisconsin State Fair. This auction is a major fundraiser for the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation, and it normally raises between \$40,000 and \$50,000.

YLC highlights one of the best aspects of 4-H: It gives

youths the opportunity to excel at the things they do best. 4-H has played an invaluable part in shaping me into the person that I am today, and YLC has been a major factor. While YLC is a big commitment, the experiences and friendships gained are worth the time that you put into it.

Kelsey Schoeppler is a member of the Pesobic Pathfinders 4-H club in Lincoln County.